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McGowan Declares Look Magazine Story 'Scurrilous'

Judge M. M. McGowan labeled as "scurrilous" yesterday a recent Look magazine article critical of Gov. Ross R. Barnett's actions in the University of Mississippi integration crisis, and said "he is incapable of deception."

"Anyone with but a sketchy knowledge of what took place at Oxford would know that any charge of a 'deal' having been made by Gov. Barnett to enroll this Negro (James H. Meredith) at the university is contrary to the physical facts and ridiculous," the judge of the seventh circuit court district said in a letter to a friend now living in Augusta, Ga.

Judge McGowan wrote that "all of the propaganda that the governor has capitulated, or changed his position, is wholly false."

"He has never changed his position," the letter to Hugh Grant, a member of the diplomatic service during President Woodrow Wilson's administration, said.

"Upon occasions when a backlog of these false accusations build up," Judge McGowan said, "he issues his original statement, briefly denying the same. Those without the confines of our state do not see it, and we here do not need to see it."

The jurist wrote that "regardless of the propaganda and powerful forces desperately trying to justify and sustain the brutal military invasion of the University of Mississippi, it has struck deep into the conscience of the nation."

"It has raised no passing dispute," the letter continued, "but the imponderable questions it poses, like Banquo's ghost, refuse to be downed, and will haunt its perpetrators for a long time to come."

Judge McGowan, in his answer to a letter from the former minister to Thailand and Albania, said it was disturbing to know that the Look story "would raise the slightest doubt in the minds of our many friends outside Mississippi."

"It is not our university, Gov. Barnett or Mississippi that is being pilloried by such false and vicious propagandas," the judge's letter said, "but the very soul of America itself."

"We live in an age of corroding morality," Judge McGowan said, "and the acceleration of the corroding process is frightening."

The letter continued:

"The Nazis of Germany were the first to discover the deadly potency of propaganda, and that man's inherent sense of rectitude could be easily warped by the simple process of suppression of truth, and the persistent spreading of falsehoods and lies."

"It seems that he who now controls the media of information and propaganda, whether by police action or immoral persuasion, has become the most dangerous and insidious tyrant of any age."

"The victim of his tyranny can protest in vain. His protests do not fall on deaf ears — but upon no ears at all. While a person, regardless of the eternal righteousness of his position, is being crucified by the unending torrent of false and cunningly conceived propaganda, his words in his defense fall upon a vacuum."

"He is foiled by a conspiracy of silence. The simple truth is ignored, is never published to the

world, and the world knows not of it. Then comes the coldest of cruelties when the assassins of what virtues he may have deliver their knockout blow by blantly stating that he is repentant, sitting in remorse trying to get forgiveness for his awful sins.

"His denial of that is also suppressed."

"His denial of that is also suppressed. The American tradition of honesty and fair play is being trampled into dust. Even the voice of protest is drowned out by the insensate clamor of the professional propagandist with the stolen resources of a nation behind him."

Judge McGowan referred to Barnett as one of the few totally guileless people I have ever known."